

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

OMB-01 SSM-03 IO-13 ACDA-07 /082 W

----- 102772

R 141221Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4162

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 6388

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR TS

SUBJECT: GOT FOREIGN MINISTER HABIB CHATTY REPUDIATES CALL  
FOR ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT MEETING.

REF: TUNIS 6170

1. GOT MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HABIB CHATTY RETURNED  
TO TUNIS FROM DAMASCUS ON SEPTEMBER 13 FROM THE ARAB  
LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS' CONFERENCE. AT THE AIRPORT HE  
TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE ARAB LEAGUE DECISION TO CALL A  
SUMMIT MEETING FOR THE THIRD WEEK OF OCTOBER -- "IN ONE  
MONTH AND THREE WEEKS" -- WAS NEITHER "POSITIVE NOR REALISTIC."  
HE SAID TUNISIA HAD AGREED TO THE DECISION IN CAIRO IN ORDER  
TO MAINTAIN UNANIMITY, BUT HE BELIEVED THE SITUATION IN  
LEBANON IS GRAVE AND REQUIRES URGENT ATTENTION. BEFORE THE  
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PROJECTED SUMMIT CONVENES MUCH COULD HAPPEN, HE SAID,

SUCH AS THE DISMEMBERMENT OF LEBANON OR THE LIQUIDATION OF THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE. CHATTY SAID THAT PEACE MUST BE RESTORED IN LEBANON BEFORE SEPTEMBER 23, WHEN SARKIS BECOMES PRESIDENT TO ALLOW HIM TO RESTORE ORDER IN THE COUNTRY.

2. CHATTY ALSO REPORTED ON HIS MISSION TO DAMASCUS ACCOMPANIED BY SAUDI AND KUWAITI FOREIGN MINISTERS. HE SAID BASIS FOR PEACE IN LEBANON REMAINS THE ACCORD SIGNED IN DAMASCUS ON JULY 29 BETWEEN SYRIA AND PLO. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCORD IS BLOCKED, CHATTY NOTED, BY FAILURE OF PARTIES TO AGREE ON MEMBERSHIP OF TRIPARTITE COMMISSION. HE SAID THAT HE AND SAUDI HELD TALKS TO SEEK PROGRESS ON THIS POINT. THE KUWAITI DID NOT ATTEND, JUDGING FROM CHATTY'S STATEMENT THAT HE WAS PREVENTED FROM PARTICIPATING BY "FORCE MAJEURE." "THE ISSUE IS SO COMPLEX, HOWEVER, THAT A SOLUTION WAS NOT FOUND."

3. CHATTY'S CANDID REPUDIATION OF CALL FOR ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT MEETING AFTER HAVING AGREED TO IT AT FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF TUNISIAN FOREIGN POLICY OF SEEKING NOT TO OFFEND POWERFUL COUNTRIES IN PUBLIC FORUMS. BACK HOME, AND AFTER EXPOSURE TO OPINIONS IN DAMASCUS, CHATTY APPARENTLY FELT THE NEED TO STRESS THE URGENCY OF SITUATION IN LEBANON, AND TO CALL FOR SOMETHING MORE PROMPT THAN MID-OCTOBER SUMMIT. HE DID NOT OFFER ANY SOLUTIONS, AND POSSIBLY BELIEVES THERE MAY BE NONE. CLEARLY, TUNISIAN MEDIATION IS NOT A REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE, AS GOT IS UNLIKELY TO DO ANYTHING TO STEP ON EITHER EGYPTIAN OR SYRIAN TOES. MULCAHY

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